

THE CLEVELAND
MUSEUM OF ART
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Directions in Drawing, 1750-1988
April 2 - August 4, 1991

Directions in Drawing, 1750-1988 shows modernist trends in Western draftsmanship over the past two centuries and the way The Cleveland Museum of Art acquired the finest drawings to chronicle that evolution. The exhibition, which will open on April 2, 1991, as a prelude to the celebrations of the Museum's 75th Anniversary, will be on view until August 4, 1991, coinciding with special anniversary exhibitions that open during the first week of June, 1991.

Michael J. Miller, assistant curator of prints and drawings, who organized the exhibition, wishes to show both the development of modern draftsmanship and the Museum's interest in collecting these works:

A drawing is an artist's first expression of an idea, which may be elaborated or translated into another medium, as in a painting or a building or sculpture, or worked up to stand alone as a final statement. Although the reputation of The Cleveland Museum of Art rests on its collection of works from past generations, the Museum has always responded sensitively to the stimulus of working artists with a prudent regard for the high standards set by earlier works. We hope this will ensure the appeal of our contemporary drawings for future generations.

Jean Baptiste Greuze (1725-1805) startled his French contemporaries by portraying scenes of family life and commonplace events in a style reserved by the art establishment for heroic classical or religious themes. Such challenges to academic norms in the mid-18th century presaged the heightened appeal and importance of contemporary subjects. Artists also began to see drawings as finished works rather than preliminary

exercises for paintings, sculpture, or buildings for the church or ruling class. Further, they rejected traditional linear perspective as a way to create the illusion of three dimensions on a flat sheet and experimented with abstraction.

Greuze's *The Guilty and Repentant Daughter* (*La Fille coupable et repentante*) presents a remorseful and obviously pregnant young woman and anxious, protective family members, all approaching her stern father, at whose feet is a distraught-looking groom--likely, the father-to-be. The work has the grand vision of his best paintings and the energy of his freest drawings. In contrast to this moral drama's extended cast of characters and Neoclassical architectural setting is American artist Eric Fischl's *Father and Son Sleeping* (1980), drawn to illustrate a short story about their incestuous affair. Though large in scale--more than 3 x 3-1/2 feet--it offers a spare view from the foot of the bed of two foreshortened figures on rumpled sheets.

Such works as Edgar Degas' charcoal and chalk *Portrait of Diego Martelli* (1879), Sándor Bortnyik's gouache *Composition* (1921), and working drawings for a Sol LeWitt wall drawing (installed temporarily at the Museum in 1987) will be among the nearly ninety works telling the history of modern draftsmanship. The accession number included on each label will reveal when the Museum acquired each work, providing a key to the evolution of the collection itself--a comprehensive American museum's integration of modernism in its choice collection of drawings.

Admission to the Museum and the exhibition is free.

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